

In the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) Optical instrument, in particular an endoscopic instrument comprising, with a housing in which at least one optical system and a replaceable hygroscopic substance are inserted, and in which an eyepiece is detachably secured to the housing wherein the hygroscopic substance is imbedded in a moldable matrix material and the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance ~~can be~~is inserted replaceably in the eyepiece.
2. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance is configured as an O-ring that can be inserted into the eyepiece.
3. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance is configured as a cylindrical sheath that can be inserted into the eyepiece.
4. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 3, wherein the moldable matrix material is elastic and penetrable to moisture when hardened.
5. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 4, wherein the moldable matrix material is an elastomer on a silicon and/or polyurethane base.
6. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 5, wherein the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance can be produced by injection molding.

7. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 5, wherein the moisture coating of the hygroscopic substance can be optically identified.
8. (Original) Optical instrument according to claim 7, wherein the hygroscopic substance indicates the moisture coating by a difference in color.
9. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 8, wherein the hygroscopic substance is a silica gel or a porous ceramic.
10. (Previously presented) Optical instrument according to claim 8, wherein the hygroscopic substance consists of a mixture of various hygroscopic substances.